

WALLOWA RESERVE.

By A. Gaskill

[1903?]

Location: The area which it is proposed to include within this reserve is an irregular piece of rough, unsurveyed land known as the Powder River Mountains, lying on both sides of the line between Wallowa and Union Counties, Oregon. It embraces in all about 23 townships.

Topography: The backbone of the reserve, lying near its middle and extending west and northwest, is a ridge of rugged rocks, barren or snow-covered at their highest points, and reaching an altitude of about 10,000 feet. (The highest contour on map is 8,000: J— says 10,000–11,000 A.G.) From the crest, lateral ridges, and deep canyons extend northeastward toward the center of Wallowa County and southwestward into Union County. On the northeast margin there is a deeply cut escarpment. Near the center of the reserve at an altitude of 8,000 feet, is Aneroid Lake (size not given) which was reported covered with ice 2 to 3 feet thick on July 2, 1899.

Water: The Powder River Mountains are the source of numerous streams which flow by way of the canyons into the Wallowa and Imnaha Rivers on the north side and into the Powder and Grande Ronde Rivers on the south and west. On the eastern border short streams, down the abrupt slopes, feed directly into Snake River. All these streams are of great importance to the agricultural lands lying just outside the reserve.

Soil: Within the reserve itself is little land of agricultural value; some ranches are established on the meadows in the foot-hills, but for the most part they are outside the wall formed by the steep mountain spurs.

Forest: A good part of the reserve is above timber line and hence is barren [*of any important growth*] or carries only sage-brush and stunted junipers. Within the region of tree growth, and where the slopes are not too steep, Bull Pine is the chief species. In places it forms 90% of the mature stand, and yields 10 M feet per acre of saw lumber. The next most important tree is the Western Larch, after which come Red Fir, Engelmann Spruce, Lodgepole Pine, Silver Pine, White Fir, Alpine Fir. In the bottoms are a few leaf trees — Vine Maple, willows, alders.

As everywhere in the western mountains, the forests of this section have been severely and repeatedly burned. Close bodies of Lodgepole Pine, and some of the firs evidence former serious fires, and old trees carry the marks of not one but many burnings.

Alternating with the forest, or forming a part of it, are many open grassy spaces, some of which are used as pastures.

Culture: There are no settlements and no mines within the reserve but large areas just outside have been taken up and numerous villages and towns established. There are several mines close by, and many of the villages cluster about sawmills, which are dependent upon logging operations, that are steadily working back from the comparatively heavy forests outside the area that it is proposed to reserve, to that which is within it. Nine mills which were in operation in 1900, between Union and Pine Valley, south of the reserve, and three on the north side, have a yearly capacity of 3000 M of lumber.

These industries are important to the section in which they are located, and the withdrawal of a part of the timber land from sale, may fairly be held to contribute to their perpetuation since the administration of the forest reserve permits the sale of timber under proper restrictions. A further important point is that the timber will be protected from fire, and young and scattered growth so fostered that the future yield may be increased. In a region where fire wood and farm lumber are so necessary, the maintenance of a sufficient supply is of great moment.

The merchantable timber within the reserve is considerable and important, but the areas so covered are far smaller than those upon which the trees are small, stunted and scattered. The latter furnish at present only fuel and posts; with care many of them may be made to yield lumber.

Wallowa Reserve.

"The mountains south of the line between Union and Wallowa Counties, beginning with T. 2 S., R. 41 E., about 6 miles wide and 12 miles long, are very sparsely timbered with Yellow Pine, and will not cut more than 500 to 1000' per acre." "The good timber begins in T. 4 S., R. 41 E., and continues as marked on map for about 40 miles long by 6-15 miles wide or about 220 square miles. Estimated timber at 1000 M per section; 90% Yellow Pine, balance Red Fir and Tamarack; along streams some *Abies concolor* and Cottonwood and at upper timber line are large patches of Lodgepole Pine, *A. lasiocarpa*, *P. albicaulis* and Engelmann's Spruce. Lodgepole Pine is used for timbers in a number of mines. There are a number of sawmills between Union and Pine Valley (probably T. 8 S., R. 46 E., A.G.) located as follows:

T. 4 S., R. 41 E. section 1	cuts 100 M per year	(outside Reserve)
T. 4 S., R. 41 E. section 19	cuts 250 per year	(outside Reserve)
T. 4 S., R. 40 E.		(probably close to Union)
T. 5 S., R. 41 E. section 6	cuts 500 per year	(outside reserve and probably connected with U.P.R.R.)
T. 5 S., R. 40 E. section 2	cuts 100 M per year	(outside reserve and probably near or on U.P.R.R.)
T. 3 S., R. 40 E. section 15	cuts 100 M per year	(outside reserve and apparently 12-15 miles from R.R.)
T. 7 S., R. 46 E. section 31	cuts 150 per year	(outside reserve and far from R.R.)
T. 8 S., R. 44 E. section 4	cuts 500 M per year	(outside reserve and far from R.R.)
T. 7 S., R. 42 E. section 3	cuts 100 M per year	(outside reserve)

Another in Pine Valley not located cuts 100 M.

The small trees and shrubs are Birch, Aspen, willows, cottonwood, alder, *Prunus*, *Cornus*, *Ceanothus*, currants, gooseberry, several *Rubus*, Red and Blue Cedar, *Vaccinium*," (a long list; see book 14).

(The foregoing includes that part of the reserve lying south and west of Powder River Mountains, and the west fork of Wallowa River — the part in Union County. The first paragraph looks off because the county line from Base line R. 41 E., follows the river and not the ridge, for 25 or 30 miles, and the timber should not be sparse just where he says it is. The map indicates that practically all of the reserve on this side (Union) carries 3-5 M timber per acre. The mills are all outside the reserve and from their locations appear to be cutting from the more accessible points on the Powder River and its tributaries, and on the feeders of Snake River, back to the mountains. Towns are frequent just outside south line of reserve). A.G.

"The country northeast of the line between Union and Wallowa Counties, called Imnaha country, is not surveyed. The timber of Imnaha country is about 6 towns and will cut 3-5 M per acre; 75% Yellow Pine; 15% Tamarack; 10% Red Fir; some White Fir, Lodgepole Pine, Engelmann's Spruce, *Pinus albicaulis* and a few *Juniperus virginiana*. If the Imnaha country was surveyed the timber would be in

T. 2 S., R. 47, 48 E.	(These are surveyed but outside reserve. A.G.)
T. 3 S., R. 47, 48 E.	(Outside reserve. A.G.)
T. 4 S., R. 46, 47 E.	(In reserve but last are south of divide. A.G.)
part of T. 5 S., R. 46, 47 E.	

(The foregoing refers chiefly to the section drained by Imnaha River and its tributaries, only one tier of towns are in the reserve. The timber maps shows that a large part of this side of the reserve is composed of barren ridges with timber only in the bottoms. The broken line of the reserve southwest of Wallowa River appears to roughly follow the extension of these ridges. A.G.)

(The foregoing is from book 14, survey apparently made 1900; an earlier book, 6, apparently of 1899, gives the following detail of the northeast border townships. A.G.).

T. 1 S., R 42 E. "Lostine sawmill cuts 500 M per year. One sawmill cuts 400 M per year."

(Lostine is in T. 1 S., R 43 E. on map but Johnson notes that T. 2 S., R 42 E., is south of Lostine. A.G.)

Northeast 1/4 is out of reserve.

T. 2 S., R 42 E. "This township has timber on north end, Red Fir, Tamarack and Yellow Pine, will cut 3 M per acre; on south side are rocks and snow mountains; 50% Yellow Pine; 40% Red Fir; 10% Tamarack."

T. 2 S., R 43 E. "A strip of timber in north end will cut 5 M per acre. 80% Yellow Pine; 10% Red Fir; 10% Tamarack. Middle portion partly burned running south up to high mountains 10,000 feet."

T. 2 S., R 44 E. "South side of township has fairly good timber — 50% Yellow Pine; 30% Red Fir; 20% Tamarack; will cut 5 M acre.

One small sawmill cutting about 250 M per year." (Does not say whether mill is probably at Enterprise; only 1/4 of township in reserve. A.G.).

T. 3 S., R 44 E. "The north end of this township on both sides of Hurricane Creek is timbered, the balance is very rough, with high snow mountains — 10,000–11,000 feet. Timber in north end is Yellow Pine 60%; Red Fir 30%; Tamarack 10%, with some White Fir and *Abies concolor*, will cut 5 M per acre."

T. 4 S., R 45 E. "Altitude, Cone Peak 10,650. Altitude, Aneroid Lake, 8,000.

This township is nearly all burned over; only a few small patches of green trees along the lake and river; Yellow Pine, Lodgepole, White bark, Tamarack, etc." (List of shrubs also given).

Aneroid Lake frozen 2–3 feet thick, July 2, 1899.